

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CENTO'S FUTURE ECONOMIC PROGRAM

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SUMMARY. MISSION SUGGESTS THREE TOPICS FOR POLICY LEVEL DISCUSSION IN CENTO ECONOMIC GROUP: (1) ROLE OF PRICING POLICIES IN MEETING NEED FOR INCREASED FOOD GRAIN AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION; (2) NEED TO SET AND IMPLEMENT POPULATION PLANNING TARGETS AND POLICIES; AND (3) HOW TO INCREASE LEVEL OF EDUCATION, LITERACY AND MANPOWER TRAINING WITHOUT INCREASING NUMER OF UNEMPLOYED. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CONSIDERING POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS AND TOPICS FOR FUTURE ACTION BY CENTO IN ECONOMIC FIELD, WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THREE IMPORTANT FACTS THAT MUST BE KEPT IN MIND: FIRST, UNLESS MEETINGS OF POLICY LEVEL OFFICIALS CENTER UPON ONE OR MORE PROBLEMS WHICH THEIR GOVERNMENT SEE AS CLEARLY CENTRAL TO THEIR CONCERNS, THEY ARE SIMPLY ONE MORE BURDEN FOR THOSE OFFICIALS, WILL HAVE NO POSITIVE RESULT, AND

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MAY HAVE NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS. SECONDLY, ALTHOUGH CENTO

ECONOMIC MEETINGS CAN BE A USEFUL WAY TO BRING IMPORTANT PROBLEMS TO CENTRAL ATTENTION OF POLICY MAKERS, MEETING MUST BE CAREFULLY PREPARED TO DO THIS IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY. THIRDLY, CENTO HAS BEEN A VERY USEFUL DEVICE FOR SPONSORING MEETINGS OF WORKING LEVEL TECHNICIANS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES AND HAS SERVED AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE RESEARCH NETWORK THAT EXCHANGES SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION. TOPIC OF THE POLICY LEVEL MEETING WILL PROBABLY BE REPEATED IN LATER TECHNICAL OR RESEARCH MEETINGS.

2. KEEPING THESE THREE POINTS IN MIND, WE CONSIDERED THAT FOLLOWING ECONOMIC POLICY PROBLEMS ARE MOST PRESSING FOR PAKISTAN, ARE SUITABLE FOR MULTILATERAL DISCUSSION, AND THEIR TECHNICAL ASPECTS COULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE EXPLORED BY WORKING RESEARCHERS AND TECHNICIANS; (A) PRICE POLICIES (BOTH FOR INPUTS AND FOODGRAINS) NEEDED FOR INCREASED FOODGRAIN AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION; (B) NEED TO SET AND IMPLEMENT POPULATION PLANNING TARGETS AND POLICIES; (C) HOW TO INCREASE LEVEL OF EDUCATION, LITERACY AND MANPOWER TRAINING WITHOUT CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMON PROBLEM OF THE EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED.

3. ALL OF ABOVE PROBLEMS ARE COMMON TO CENTO MEMBERS, BUT WITH SUFFICIENT DIFFERENCES TO MAKE AN EXCHANGE AT BOTH POLICY AND TECHNICAL LEVELS USEFUL. FOR EXAMPLE, AGRICULTURAL PRICING POLICIES ARE A COMMON PROBLEM BUT COUNTRIES DIFFER IN THEIR FERTILIZER AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION NETS. TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OF RELATIVE INPUT(FERTILIZER) AND OUTPUT PRICES ARE SUITABLE FOR TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS. POLICY PROBLEMS (URBAN CONSUMERS VERSUS FARMERS) ARE SUITABLE FOR CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION BY POLICY MAKERS. RELATED AND SUBSIDIARY TO QUESTION OF INPUT PRICING, PAKISTAN IS EMBARKING ON AN INTENSIVE FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN ITS AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CAPABILITY. AN IMPORTANT FACET OF SUCH CAPABILITY IS THE CONSTANT USE, WIDENING, AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LINKS IN THE INFORMATION NETWORK BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS. CENTO SEMINARS CAN PERFORM AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION IN THIS REGARD.

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4. ANOTHER WAY OF STATING SUGGESTED THIRD TOPIC IS METHODS OF REDIRECTING EMPHASIS TO NON-FORMAL METHODS. AT POLICY LEVEL, DISCUSSION ARE OBVIOUS. AT TECHNICAL LEVEL, VARIED EXPERIENCE CREATES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GOOD EXCHANGES. FOR EXAMPLE, IRAN HAS HAD A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE IN THE USE OF ITS MILITARY TO STAFF AND SUPPLEMENT ITS FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM AT PRIMARY LEVEL AND RURAL AREAS. TURKEY HAS ALSO DONE SOME EXPERIMENTATION IN THIS DIRECTION. WE

BELIEVE WIDER DISSEMINATION OF THIS EXPERIENCE AND DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS UNCOVERED AND SUCCESSES ACHIEVED WOULD BE A VERY USEFUL CENTO FUNCTION.
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